

# doing democracy

connecting academia and civil society across borders

## Empowering through direct democracy and citizen assemblies

### Political Participation

Delete the topic(s) that are non-applicable to your organization.

### Short (Research) Profile & Mission



- With more than 11,000 members, Mehr Demokratie is the largest NGO for direct democracy and citizen participation in Germany. The non-profit association is both a professional association and a citizens' movement and works on a non-partisan basis. For more than 30 years, we have been working for direct democracy, fair suffrage, transparency, and effective citizen participation, such as lottery-based citizens' assemblies at all political levels.

### Current (Research) Project

- **KLIMATRIFFT KOMMUNE** is a pilot project that tests new approaches to democratic decision-making. Four municipalities are holding citizens' assemblies on climate issues. The citizens' assemblies are convened in advance by the city council. The citizens' assembly develops recommendations on a specific topic. The city council then schedules a referendum. Ultimately, citizens vote in a referendum on the recommendations made by the assembly. It is the first systematic combination of deliberative and direct democracy in Germany.

### Current (Research) Project

- More information: <https://www.klimatrifftkommune.de/>
- English Project Information and project timeline
- The project will be scientifically evaluated by the university of Wuppertal (IDPF).



### Questions to Academia

- How do we measure the medium-term impact of citizen participation and direct democracy? Surveys show that there is a desire for greater participation and growing dissatisfaction with democracy. There are few surveys on satisfaction with participatory processes that take place during and immediately after processes. But there is a lack of panel surveys of comparison groups, i.e., participating citizens and non-participating citizens.
- Does combining citizen's assemblies with direct democracy produce positive effects on the public like high voter turnout or high legitimacy of the citizens' assembly?

### Questions to Civil Society

- Resistance to climate politics and to the expansion of democratic participation is growing. What strategies are available to civil society to make both issues relevant again and to advance them in a progressive manner? What strategies and collaborations can we develop?
- How can participatory formats counteract the growing polarization on climate issues?

### Questions to (Political) Decision-Makers

- Local conflicts can be addressed through smart participation and referendums. This also usually saves money. Important matters of general interest should be decided collectively. How do we establish good standards and improve the conditions for participation and direct democracy?
- How can participation be implemented in times when municipalities have increasingly less money and personnel available?

### Contact

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